



ANTHROPOMORPHIC FANTASY ROLE-PLAY

IRONCLAW

Second Edition
Omnibus



Let It Be Known That On The First Day of The Month
Of November In The Year Two-Thousand And Ten That

IRONCLAW

being a role-playing game of anthropomorphic fantasy, was created by Jason Holmgren and built
upon the foundation of Cardinal game technology sponsored by Sanguine Productions Limited

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WE ALSO EXTEND
OUR ACCOLADES TO
THESE FEAR-LESS
ADVENTURERS FOR
THEIR VALOR, THEIR
WIT, AND THEIR
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BEAGEN

From the Frozen wastes of the untamed Wildenlands comes this troubled soul who seeks meaning in his savage world.



VESPER

A man of peace and generosity, this cleric has devoted his life to alleviating the suffering that is so ubiquitous in this world.



ANNUSHKA

There's so much of the world to see, and so little time to see it all!



HENDRICK

A Fellow so cunning, he could be naught else but a weasel, this quick-fingered scoundrel sees no doors, bars, or locks ... only delays.



ANONYMOUS

What tragedy could have happened to convince her to give up her past, and her name?



MANSUR

It's not that he particularly enjoys sorcery ... it's that there is nothing he enjoys more.





ANTON

His sincerity would be insufferable, if he wasn't so good at being the knight in shining armor who saves the day.



TYCHO

It can take a lifetime to master the art of wizardry, but to know the art of thaumaturgy is to be a worker of miracles.



DIERDRE

Don't let the old injury fool you. There are very few who can let an arrow fly with the accuracy of this former soldier.



MAVRA

With her reputation as the notorious "bandit killer", this fox has formidable skills in both the arts of battle and of magic.



LADY AMALSAND

The Dowager Primadonna, the Queen Mother of the Mausoleum, the Fox Necropolitan - these are but a few of the names of the widow of High King Don Rinaldi. None dare accuse her directly of the murder of her husband, as all know of her plans to make her son the ruler of all she surveys.



VASLOV

The favorite son of Lady Amalsand, everything comes easily to him: academics, diplomacy, seduction ... and murder. All the nobles of the Great Houses fear the end of the salad days, when Vaslov claims the crown of all the land.

WHAT IS IRONCLAW?

If you've NEVER played a role-playing game before ...

To play the game of *Ironclaw*, you will assume a *role*. You will make up a *character* who lives in the fantasy land of Calabria. You will choose a name for your character, what sort of species they are (bat, cat, rat, etc.), and what sort of job they have (crafter, fighter, wizard, etc.).

One of you will be the *Host*, the director of the story. The Host tells you what's happening in the world, and to your character. Shop-keepers want to sell you things! Thieves want to steal your money! Monsters want to eat your face! Villains want to do bad things! Victims want your help against the forces of tyranny! As you pretend to be your role, you will tell the Host what you want to do, and the Host tells you whether it happens or not.

Just like how authors write a story, you and the Host will have to decide if what you want to do is possible or not. Many times, you will push your character to new heights of glory, uncertain of the outcome. To represent taking a chance, *Ironclaw* uses *dice*, those funny shaped things with the numbers on them. You've probably seen the cube-shaped, six-sided dice before. *Ironclaw* also uses four-sided, eight-sided, ten-sided, and twelve-sided dice. (The four-sided pyramids are a little weird – when you roll them, look at the number at the base, to see what you scored.) You will roll several dice at once, in all different shapes and sizes. If the text says “Roll 2d10, 3d6”, then you roll two ten-sided dice and three six-sided dice and check out each number. Usually, only the highest number matters. Sometimes, the second- or third-highest numbers will matter. Don't add the dice together.

You start the game with ratings in general abilities called *Traits*. Your character is rated in strength and hardiness (*Body*), quickness and agility (*Speed*), smarts and wits (*Mind*), stubbornness and determination (*Will*), instinct and natural ability (*Species*), and training and schooling in their job (*Career*). Each Trait is measured with dice. The bigger your dice are – that is, the more sides they have – then the higher they can roll, so the better your character is at doing things.

You can improve your character by buying *Skills* – specialized dice for certain tasks like climbing, searching, building, sneaking, etc. – and by buying *Gifts* – new abilities that let you do things the non-gifted can't do, like cast mighty spells or perform amazing stunts.

Some abilities can only be used a limited number of times, or they require you to do something to refresh

them. When a Gift *Exhausts*, you must Refresh it before you're allowed to use it again. Each Gift is different, and each one has different rules on how often it can be used.

Books, television, and movies often brush over long spreads of time, such as “Three weeks went by as Mavra searched for the book.” But when an action sequence starts up, suddenly everything is described in great detail. “Mavra reached for her sword, her eyes quivering with rage, and she leveled the point against the charging bandit, and she barked a strangled curse.” *Ironclaw* will often use *narrative time* to breeze through long periods of time, but then will switch into *combat time* to describe a fight scene blow by blow. When a fight starts, each Player will get a turn to do something – well, two somethings, actually, which are called *Actions*. There's lots of rules for what Actions do, and they're covered in the *Combat* chapter, but the main rule is that you can do two things, as long as they're *different* things.

Ironclaw is an action game, so there will be lots of fighting. As people get hit, they will become hurt, they will lose the will to fight, and they may even be killed. Just like how the main character doesn't get bumped off in the first five minutes of the story, your character begins the game with some special abilities to protect them ... but be careful! It will take quick wits, skillful planning, and a heroic attitude to win the day.

This book may look intimidating, with all the rules, but most of this stuff only comes up in rare cases. And in the end, there's only one golden rule to role-playing:

Have fun!

If you've played a COMPUTER role-playing game before ...

One player acts as the *Game Host*. He or she is the moderator who decides what content will be available in the game, what rules are in effect, how those rules should be played out. As a *Player*, you declare what you want to do, and the Host tells you how it plays out. The Host says what goes and what doesn't.

Ironclaw is a story-based game. What you did yesterday will affect what folks think of you today. Many computer games have locked doors, obstructed passageways, or even invisible walls that block your progress ... and the people in the world are just props, they don't remember who you are nor have any opinions about you. In *Ironclaw*, the only limits are your

imagination: you can go anywhere and talk to anyone, making new friends ... and maybe new enemies.

Ironclaw gives characters several special abilities, called *Gifts*. Many Gifts grant special abilities that *Exhaust* the Gift – you'll have to Refresh the Gift before you can use it again. When an ability can Refresh will vary; some Gifts have long cool-down times, others can be Refreshed in the middle of a fight.

Funny-shaped dice will be used, to add random elements to the game. If the text says "Roll 2d10, 3d6", then you roll two ten-sided dice and three six-sided dice and check out each number. Usually, only the highest number matters. Sometimes, the second- or third-highest numbers will matter. Don't add the dice together.

Ironclaw has two kinds of time: "narrative time" and "combat time." Narrative time is more like a cut scene, where characters establish things that they'll do, or talk about things related to their personalities. Game time is rigidly measured out in hours, minutes, or even 6-second increments (called *rounds*), and what you declare, at what time, is very important.

Combat is turn-based, with one side taking all of their actions, and then another side taking all of theirs. Each side can take their turns in whatever order they want ... so usually the healers go first, to remove bad statuses from the fighters, and then the fighters attack.

Being hit in combat causes *Reeling* – a de-buff status that lowers your defenses and makes you lose one of your actions. It's quite possible for a character to get stunned and to be beaten up by an angry mob. To prevent stun-locking, you must be really good at countering, or you must fight at range, or you must have some really good healers on your side. Any character can attempt to remove Reeling, using their Will and Leadership ... so it's a good idea to have one or two members in your party who have strong Will and great Leadership!

Area-of-effect attacks are rare, but many of them have friendly fire. Don't drop a grenade in the middle of a fight if you might catch some of your friends in the blast!

Ironclaw is a point-based system, where characters earn Experience and then spend them to buy up their Skills and to buy new Gifts. Points are earned by surviving to the next Chapter, by good role-playing, and by completing objectives.

If you've played a TABLETOP role-playing game before ...

The master of the game is called the *Host*. Everyone else is called a *Player*. Non-player-characters are divided up into *Major Characters* (who may have any special ability that the PCs can get) and *Minor Characters* (who are denied any major abilities, and thus could be taken out with one lucky hit.)

Ironclaw uses typical polyhedral dice. Usually, only the highest number matters. Sometimes, the second- or third-highest numbers will matter. Don't add the dice together.

Ironclaw divides combat into rounds, and each player takes a turn. First all the combatants on one side take their turns, then all the combatants on the other side take their turns. On your turn, you can declare two actions, which must be different. (For example, you can "dash" towards someone, then "attack" them, but you couldn't declare two attacks.) You can learn special abilities that increase the number of actions, or that let you combine actions, but the golden rule is "never the same action twice, on the same turn."

Ironclaw doesn't use hit points. Each character gains more and more bad statuses. At first, statuses just increase future damage ... but bigger damage results can make your character lose the will to fight, knock them down, or kill them.

Ironclaw is a point-based system, where characters earn Experience and then spend them to buy up their Skills and to buy new special abilities (called *Gifts*). Points are earned by surviving to the next point in the story or by good role-playing. Completing an objective can win you an entirely new Gift.

If you've played a previous version of IRONCLAW before ...

Here's a quick guide to the major changes.

- ↔ **Fewer Skills, more Gifts.** There are only 26 skills, and that's it. Everything else is a Gift.
- ↔ **Lower starting abilities.** You now start with 2d8, 3d6, and d4. You only start with 13 Marks to put in Skills, with a maximum of 3 Marks in any one Skill. (If that bothers your group, check out the Variant Rules for ideas on starting with more power.)
- ↔ **Flat Costs.** Skill Marks cost 4 experience, all Gifts cost 10 experience. All Gifts have the same cost, but many have requirements. Everyone starts the game with the same number of Gifts and Skill Marks.
- ↔ **Bonuses and Penalties are more dice.** A bonus for you is another die to roll. A penalty for you is a bonus die to the other side. No more bumping up die sizes, no more re-rolls.
- ↔ **Exhaustions and Refreshes.** Some Gifts grant abilities you can use any time you want. Other Gifts must be Exhausted, and then you must Refresh them before you can use any of their abilities again.
- ↔ **Faster Combat.** There's no "ranks of initiative" ... there's no initiative rolling every round. Characters take their turns in the most logical order, and everyone gets two actions to decide what to do. (Recovering from Reeling is one action, so getting

hit only makes you lose half your turn, not your whole turn.)

The standard melee defense is now the Counter-Attack: two combatants dice off, the winner hits the loser ... so something happens to somebody.

Your attack roll is also your damage roll. Every success you score to hit someone counts as +1 point of damage. Each weapon adds bonus damage to that. You still roll Soak dice, but now you count 4s or better as -1 point of damage, each.

Hit points have been replaced with status effects; being damaged can not only injure or kill, it can demoralize a combatant so they can't attack, which may end a fight.

- ↔ **Magic.** All Magic is handled by Gifts. There are no more Magic Points. Many magic spells are weapons that are readied, thrown, then readied again.
- ↔ **Re-training.** You can exchange Marks and Gifts for experience points, to change your character.

CONTENTS

What is IRONCLAW? 2

If you've never played a role-playing game	before ...	2
If you've played a computer role-playing game	before ...	2
If you've played a tabletop role-playing game	before ...	3
If you've played a previous version of IRONCLAW	before ...	3

Character Creation 6

Starting Traits	6
Starting Species	7
Starting Career	7
Starting Personality	7
Starting Local Knowledge	7
Add your 13 Skill Marks	8
Add 3 Gifts	8
Add up your Skill Marks to determine Skill Dice	9
Choose a Name	9
Choose a Motto	10
Choose a Starting Goal	11
Choose your Equipment	11
Battle Array	11

Species 13

Careers 33

Skills 37

Skill Dice	37
Skill Marks	37
Descriptions of Skills	38
Academics (Culture, Mental)	39
Brawling (Physical)	39
Climbing (Encumbered, Physical)	39
Craft (Physical, Mental)	39
Deceit (Culture, Social)	40
Digging (Physical)	40
Dodge (Encumbered, Physical)	40
Endurance (Encumbered, Physical)	40
Gossip (Culture, Social)	41

Inquiry (Culture, Social)	41
Jumping (Encumbered, Physical)	41
Leadership (Culture, Social)	42
Mêlée Combat (Physical)	42
Negotiation (Culture, Social)	42
Observation (Mental)	43
Presence (Social)	43
Ranged Combat (Physical)	44
Riding (Physical)	44
Searching (Mental)	44
Stealth (Encumbered, Physical, Mental)	44
Supernatural (Mental)	45
Swimming (Encumbered, Mental)	45
Tactics (Physical, Mental)	46
Throwing (Physical)	46
Vehicles (Physical, Mental)	46
Weather Sense (Physical, Mental)	46

Gifts 47

Explanation of Gifts (Descriptors)	47
Opportunity Cost	48
Exhaustion and Refresh	48
Physical Gifts	50
Mental Gifts	53
Social Gifts	57
Trappings Gifts	60
Character Development Gifts	65
Natural Gifts	66
Magical Gifts	84

Equipment 88

Money	88
Finding Stuff	89
Encumbrance	90
Weapons	90
Effects and Descriptors, Explained	100
Armor	104
Shields	104
Care 105	
Consumables	105
Containers	105

Food and Drink	106
Garments	106
Illumination	106
Labor	106
Lodging	106
Personal Items	107
Transportation	107
Trade gear	108
Valuables	108
Suggestions for Other Items	108

How to Play 109

One Participant is the Game Host	109
Declare First; Claim Later	109
The Funny-Shaped Things With the Numbers On Them: Dice	110
Your Highest Showing Die: The Score	110
Beating the odds: Successes	111
Overwhelming Victory: Multiple Successes	111
Facing off against someone: Dice-Rolling Contest	111
Rolling all ones: Botches	111
Making Ties into Successes: Breaking a Tie	111
Quotas	112
Extra Dice for you: Bonus	112
Extra dice for them: Penalty	112
Getting Some Help: Assists	112
Same Old, Same Old: Rotes	112
Less-Than-Ideal Circumstances: Limits	113
Something for Nothing: Favor	113

Combat Rules 114

Narrative Time vs. Combat Time	114
Combat in a Nutshell	114
The Set-Up	114
Divide the Battle into Two Sides	114
First, Refresh all Battle Gifts	114
Ring the Bell to Start the Fight: Initiative	114
The Side that Starts the Battle Goes First	115
When the Round Ends, deal with pending issues	115
Taking your Turn	116
Actions	116

Descriptions of Actions	116	The Avoirdupois	159	Journeyman Water Magic.....	294
Focus Turn.....	119	The Bisclavret	175	Master Water Magic	295
Taking Action on Someone Else's Turn: Interrupt	119	The Doloreaux.....	189	Secret Star Magic of the Dunwasser Academy	297
Attacks.....	120	The Phelan	201	Journeyman Cognoscente Magic	299
Threatening Zones and Defenses.....	121	The Rinaldi	215	Master Cognoscente Magic.....	300
Attacks vs. Defenses	123	The Free City of Triskellian ...	219	Journeyman White Magic.....	303
Results	124	Other Folk of Calabria	222	Master White Magic	307
Attack vs. Resistance	125	Gazetteer	227	Journeyman Thaumaturgy	308
Retreating and Pressing	126	Menagerie	254	Master Thaumaturgy	311
Reeling.....	127	Minor Characters.....	254	Using the Part for the Whole: Synecdoche	312
Damage	127	Major Characters.....	258	Ultimate Power Over Life and Death: Necromancy....	312
Recovery from Attacks.....	130	Beasts of Burden.....	262	Apprentice Necromancy	312
Scope of Attacks.....	131	Untamed Beasts.....	265	Journeyman Necromancy	313
Spot Rules and Variant Rules.....	132	Beings of Primordial Material: Elementals	268	Master Necromancy.....	315
Character Development	133	Lingering Phantoms of Emotion: Shades	271	Necromantic Weapons.....	316
Experience	133	That Which is Not Dead Can Eternal Lie: Undead.....	272	Atavism, or The Wilding Way .	317
Beginning of play: The reading of the Mottos and Goals	133	Ferocious Monsters of Battle: Goblins	277	Adventure: The Closing of the City Gates.....	323
Chapters.....	133	Other Careers.....	279	What Has Gone On Before.....	323
Goals	133	Advanced Magic	286	The Tale of How Our Heroes Came to Meet	323
End of Session	133	Journeyman Air Magic	286	Dramatis Personæ	330
Improving your Character: Spending Experience	134	Master Air Magic.....	287	Appendix: Statutes	332
Changing your Character: Retraining.....	134	Journeyman Earth Magic	288	Appendix: Variant Rules	336
Hosting the Game.....	137	Master Earth Magic.....	289	Appendix: Time.....	340
Know the Theme of Your Game.....	137	Journeyman Fire Magic.....	291	Index	346
Spot Rules.....	145	Master Fire Magic	292		
Movement	145				
Environment	151				



CHARACTER CREATION

CHARACTER CREATION

Game Terms	
Career	Your character's job
Equipment	Stuff that your character carries around
Gift	A special advantage that the non-gifted don't have
Goal	An objective your character wants to accomplish
Mark	A measure of skill training
Motto	The slogan that your character lives by
Name	What they call your character
Personality	A Gift that grants a bonus d12 to a certain behavior
Skill	Key abilities in the game, rated by training
Species	Your character's genetic race
Trait	Body, Speed, Mind, & Will – measures of your ability

Here we'll talk you through the steps of making your own character.

Starting Traits

You start with one d4, three d6s, and two d8s. Assign these traits to your Body, Speed, Mind, Will, Species, and Career.

What's the best way to assign your traits?

There is no one "right" answer for how to assign your Trait Dice, but we can give you some good advice.

An excellent strategy is to drop the first d8 into your Career. Your Career represents what your character does most, so you probably want a d8 in that Trait.

The second d8 is a little tricky: if you see your character as a muscle-bound type, put the d8 in Body; a fast and agile shooter, put the d8 in Speed; a thinker and a learned sort, put the d8 in Mind; as a stubborn hero who never gives up, put the d8 in Will; or as a prime example of what it means to be the sort of critter that they are, put the d8 in Species..

Your character also has that d4 – a weak point in their character. If you see your character as thin or small, put the d4 in Body; as awkward or clumsy, put the d4 in Speed; as uneducated or simple, put the d4 in Mind; as indecisive and wimpy, put the d4 in Will; and as far more humanoid than bestial, put the d4 in Species.

And don't worry – if that d4 really bothers you, you can improve these Trait Dice later.

YOUR CHARACTER HAS SIX BASIC TRAITS THAT DEFINE JUST WHAT SORT OF PERSON THEY ARE. FOR EXAMPLE, YOU MIGHT DECIDE TO CREATE A **CAT MERCENARY**...



A CHARACTER WITH BIG DICE IN **BODY**, **WILL**, AND **SPECIES** WILL BE A SAVAGE, BRUTAL WARRIOR. HE WOULD BE A POWERFUL ATHLETE, HE COULD SNEAK THROUGH THE SHADOWS AND POUNCE ON HIS FOES, THEN SAVAGE THEM WITH CLAWS AND TEETH. HE WOULD RELY ON HIS NATURAL INSTINCTS, AND HE WOULD PROBABLY LEAVE THE HEAVY THINKING TO OTHERS.



A CHARACTER WITH BIG DICE IN **SPEED**, **MIND**, AND **CAREER** WOULD BE A STEELY-EYED SOLDIER. HE WOULD BE VERY GOOD WITH WEAPONS AND ARMOR, AND HE WOULD BE SKILLED WITH TACTICS AND NEGOTIATION. HE WOULD PREFER TO THINK FIRST AND TO CHOOSE HIS BATTLES CAREFULLY.

THERE'S NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY TO CHOOSE YOUR TRAITS. THINK ABOUT WHAT YOUR CHARACTER WOULD BE LIKE, WHAT THEIR STRENGTHS ARE, AND HOW THEY WOULD DEAL WITH PROBLEMS. AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, **HAVE FUN!**

Starting Species

Choose your Species. Write down the three Gifts it gives you. Write down your Habitat, Cycle, Diet, Senses, and Weapons.

Find the Species column on the Skill List. Find the three skill rows that your Species Trait is included with. Write your Species Trait's die in each of the three rows, in the Species column.

What is the best Species to take?

Most people who play *Ironclaw* have a preferred species in mind: Cat, Fox, Raccoon, Horse, Rat, etc. Naturally, the best Species is the one that you are the most comfortable assuming as a role.

Other players will want to pick a Species that has a specific advantage for their character's role. For example, cats can be sneaky fighters who strike from the shadows ... squirrels can jump from tree-top to tree-top ... horses can carry heavy loads and run fast ... et cetera.

Starting Career

Choose your Career. Write down the three Gifts it gives you.

If you get the same Gift twice, only write it down once, and instead give yourself "Increased Trait (of choice)". The Gift of Increased Trait lets you increase any Trait to the next die size.

Find the Career column on the Skill List. Find the three skill rows that your Career Trait is included with. Write your Career Trait's die in each of the three rows, in the Career column.

Starting Personality

Everyone starts with a Personality Gift. Choose your Personality now, either from the suggested list below or just make one up, using one or two words.

The Personality Gift is the major defining feature of your character. Is your character a dashing hero, renowned for their boldness? Are they preening and vain, with pride that sometimes gets the better of them?

After playing your character for a while, you may decide on a different Personality. That's fine – you can change to a new Personality at no cost.

What personality should my character have?

If you're having trouble coming up with a Personality, here's a list of common suggestions.

- ↔ Altruistic, Selfless, or Self-Sacrificing
- ↔ Bold, Dashing, or Reckless
- ↔ Charitable, or Giving
- ↔ Chaste, Abstemious, or Pure
- ↔ Choleric, or Vengeful
- ↔ Envious, or Jealous
- ↔ Gluttonous, or Unrestrained
- ↔ Greedy
- ↔ Gregarious, or Friendly
- ↔ Humble
- ↔ Kind
- ↔ Lustful
- ↔ Melancholy, or Sad
- ↔ Naïve
- ↔ Obsequious, Sycophantic, or Flattering
- ↔ Patient
- ↔ Phlegmatic, or Listless
- ↔ Proud, or Vain
- ↔ Sanguine, Hopeful, or Optimistic
- ↔ Selfish
- ↔ Slothful, or Lazy
- ↔ Sneaky, Duplicitous, or Deceptive
- ↔ Sympathetic
- ↔ Temperate, Ascetic, or Restrained
- ↔ Wrathful, or Angry
- ↔ Zealous, Diligent, or Stubborn

In the world of *Ironclaw*, physicians and learned folk will describe *Choleric*, *Melancholy*, *Phlegmatic*, and *Sanguine* as the **Four Humors** — an “unbalanced” personality caused by a build-up of fluids in the body.

The popular religion known as the Church of s'Allumer condones the **Eight Virtues** of being *Altruistic*, *Charitable*, *Chaste*, *Humble*, *Kind*, *Patient*, *Selfless*, *Temperate*, and *Zealous*. These Personalities are admired by the pious and the righteous. On the other side of the coin, the Church condemns the Eight Vices of being *Envious*, *Gluttonous*, *Greedy*, *Lustful*, *Proud*, *Selfish*, *Slothful*, and *Wrathful*. Many church sermons speak out against such behavior.

Starting Local Knowledge

Ask your Game Host where the game will be starting. When they tell you the place name, write that in under “Local Knowledge”.

CHARACTER CREATION



Add your 13 Skill Marks

You may now place 13 Marks into any skills you want. You may *not* put more than 3 Marks per Skill.

Later, some Gifts may push you past the 3-Mark limit. For right now you can only put up to 3 Marks in a single Skill.

How should I assign my Skill Marks?

All Skills are good to have! Your character already starts with some dice to roll when using a few Skills — your character has a Species and a Career, and those Trait dice are included with several Skills. Marks can give you even more dice in Skills your character already has ... or the Marks can be in other abilities to make your character wiser in the ways of the world.

Some players may prefer the route of putting 1 Mark in each of 13 different Skills, becoming a jack-of-all-trades. A Skill roll carries the risk of catastrophic failure, known as a *Botch*. Botches are much, much more likely with Skills where the character has no training at all ... so even one Mark can make a big difference. Also, having that one Mark lets your character declare *Favorite Uses* for Skills, which can be a minor bonus.

Most of your foes will have dice no larger than d6. If you can get your Skill up to at least 3 Marks, you'll have a d8 to roll. In other words, if you want your skill to work against almost everyone you meet, put 3 Marks or more in it.

Some players will prefer the "minimaxing" route of picking four skills to have 3 Marks apiece. More Marks mean bigger dice, and bigger dice are always better.

Remember that you may only place up to three Marks in a single skill at this step, the character creation step. You'll earn more Marks as you play the game.

What Skills should I put Marks in?

Ask yourself what you think your character will be doing. Adventurers live dangerous lives, and that makes some skills more popular than others: *Dodge* to avoid being hit in combat, *Melee Combat* to use hand-to-hand weapons, *Ranged Combat* for shooting people, and *Brawling* for punching, kicking, clawing, and biting.

Skill Marks can also round out the weaknesses of some classes. If your Career lacks talking skills, you'll probably want to buy some *Gossip* and *Inquiry*. If you're worried about missing clues, consider *Observation* and *Searching*.

The bonus dice from Skill Marks stack with your Trait Dice ... so if you want to be the best at what you do, get high Traits and high Marks.

Later in the game, you can change Marks

Don't worry too much if you forget something. Your character will earn more Marks as you play the game. Also, you will be able to trade in Marks you're not using for extra points.

Add 3 Gifts

You may add three Gifts of your choice. They can be any 3 Gifts that you meet the Requirements for.

What Gifts can I take?

What are Requirements?

Some Gifts are *Basic Gifts*. Any character can take these Gifts. There are no special requirements, prerequisites or other conditions.

Advanced Gifts will have one or more *requirements* — conditions that must be met before your character is allowed to have these Gifts. Sample requirements include:

- ↔ *Another Gift*. For example, you can't take the Gift of "Rapid Guard" unless you already have the Gift of "Veteran". If you don't already have the Veteran Gift, you will have to buy Veteran as one of your 3 starting Gifts, then buy Rapid Guard as another of your starting Gifts.
- ↔ *A minimum Trait*. For example, the Gift of "Animal Magnetism" requires "Species Trait of d10 or better". If your character's Species Trait is d10, or d12, then you may take the Gift. If the Trait is only d4, d6, or d8, you may not. You may use the Gift of "Increased Trait" to raise a Trait to the level you need.
- ↔ *Special permission from the Game Host*. For example, the gift of "Ordainment" would make your character a recognized priest or priestess of a popular religion. Such characters can be fun to play, but they also have big obligations. You and your Game Host should spend a minute or two to discuss what the Gift means and how it will affect your character.

When a Gift has multiple requirements, you must have all the requirements before you can take it. For example, the gift of "White Magic" requires both "Literacy" and "Cleric's Trappings". Your character must have both Gifts before they can take "White Magic".

What Gifts should I take?

As an adventurer, your character will live a dangerous life, so some Gifts will be more popular than others:





CHARACTER CREATION

- ↔ **Increased Trait** – If you're unsure what Gifts to take, then making your Trait Dice bigger is always good. The Gift of Increased Trait improves a die to the next size. For example, a Speed of d6 would become d8. Use Increased Trait to get rid of that d4 you start with, or to improve your Career Trait (since you'll be using your Career Die a lot).
- ↔ **Literacy** – The world of Ironclaw is primitive, and there's no popular education. Characters without the Gift of Literacy cannot read at all! A few Careers, such as wizards, start with Literacy ... but most Careers don't. If you want your character to be able to read and write, take Literacy.
- ↔ **Luck** – This Gift allows you to force a die to be re-rolled, taking the best of three throws. Luck can be a real life-saver. And since Luck works on almost any die roll, it can also fix your character's bad Skill rolls, making Luck a good buy for multi-talented heroes.
- ↔ **Resolve** – Characters who get beaten up a lot learn how to walk it off. The Gift of Resolve lets you use your Will to resist damage. Fighting Careers start with Resolve, but it's a good buy for anyone who might take a hit.
- ↔ **Toughness** – Some folks are made of sterner stuff. The Gift of Toughness may be tapped to weaken damage done to your character. What's more, a character can take the Gift of Toughness multiple times, to weaken multiple hits.
- ↔ **Veteran** – The Gift of Veteran improves how your character aims at their targets and how they guard against attackers. Most fighting Careers start with Veteran; all would-be warriors should take it.

Some Gifts say "+1 Mark" to a Skill. These Gifts can push you over the 3-Mark Limit

For example, the Gift of Knack gives you +1 Mark to a Skill of your choice. If you already had 3 Marks in Stealth, then you now have 4. Only Gifts that grant Skill Marks can push you over the 3-Mark limit, at character creation. (After you start playing the game, there is no limit to Skill Marks.)

Later in the game, you can change Gifts

Don't worry too much about whether this Gift is better than that Gift, or if you're choosing the "wrong" Gifts. Your character will earn more Gifts as you play the game. Also, you will be able to trade in Gifts you're not using for extra points.

Add up your Skill Marks to determine Skill Dice

After all Marks and Gifts are taken, you can now determine your Skill Dice. More Marks means more dice.

- ↔ Zero Marks = No dice.
- ↔ 1 Mark = d4
- ↔ 2 Marks = d6
- ↔ 3 Marks = d8
- ↔ 4 Marks* = d10
- ↔ 5 Marks* = d12
- ↔ 6 Marks* = d12, d4

* At this step in your character's creation, more than 3 Marks is only possible if you have a Gift that adds Marks.

Dice from Skill Marks do not add to Traits

The extra dice you get from Skill Marks stay in their own column. For example, a Trait of "Species: Horse d6" would give you a d6 in Endurance. If you put 1 Mark in Endurance, you would have an extra d4, for a total of "d6, d4". (You do *not* have a d8.)

Choose a Name

Wow, did we actually get this far, and your character doesn't have a *name* yet? Let's fix that!

Common Names

Every character has at least one common name, so we know who is who in a crowd. Different regions of Calabria will have different naming conventions. Here's a listing of 52 names to help get you started.

Sample Female Names		Sample Male Names	
Abelinda	Nerilda	Alais	Nicephore
Belamire	Odelie	Beauvais	Odilon
Celestyna	Pierrine	Calixto	Petronius
Damasile	Qerene	Dalvany	Quentilien
Eldorienne	Renata	Echetone	Raguenot
Franzoez	Stessy	Foucauld	Sauvaire
Grilequin	Theognosia	Garion	Theudbald
Hombelina	Ultragotha	Heracleus	Ulderic
Irounia	Vigilia	Itamar	Vicente
Javiere	Wynne	Jean-Matthieu	Wilmot
Khalidah	Xavierre	Konhoyarn	Xever
Lecheme	Yfame	Leofred	Yariv
Magloirienne	Zozimene	Malaquias	Zemarchus

Noble Surnames

Horses of noble birth will have the surname of their house: *Boulanger* or *Moulin*. An arrogant knight-errant might declare their last name to simply be *Avoirdupois*.



CHARACTER CREATION

Noble foxes, especially grey ones, may be of the *Rinaldi* blood-line. The Rinaldi once ruled all of Calabria, but their house has fallen into deep decline. These days, the Rinaldi have all the privileges of nobility but none of the respect.

Boars of high privilege are *Doloreaux*.

Wolves of nobility are almost always *Bisclavret*, but often they may claim another house.

The Avoirdupois horses, Bisclavret wolves, and Doloreaux boars, are the three *Great Noble Houses*. The Great Houses recognize each other as peers. The Rinaldi foxes are the *First Great House*, and their patriarch, the *Don Rinaldi* or *High King Rinaldi*, is recognized by the Great Houses as the rightful ruler of all of Calabria.... Well, the letter of the law recognizes the Don, anyway. In reality, the Rinaldi have become so weakened that the Great Houses do as they want, fighting their battles amongst each other. Each Great King hopes to gain enough power so that he may declare himself High King and then crush any challengers to their title.

Not all horses, boars, and wolves need be of noble blood of a Great House. There are still tribes of commoners who serve their blooded masters. So yes, you can play a horse who isn't an Avoirdupois.

Dozens of other noble bloodlines exist. These *Lesser Houses* or *Minor Houses* have sworn fealty to a Great House. With the permission of the Game Host, you can make up your own Minor House, complete with its checkered history of marriages, fortunes, and scandals. The Gazetteer has a lot more details on the world, and it starts on page 227.

Nicknames

Most commoners don't have a last name. Often, folks will earn *nicknames*, to tell them apart: "Young Pierre", "Fat Pierre", "Pierre the Polecat", "Pierre the Miller", "Pierre from Granvert", "One-Eyed Pierre", and so forth. Sometimes, the reason for the nickname is long gone, but the nickname sticks – for example, maybe "Old Pierre" died twenty years ago, and Young Pierre has since turned gray, but everyone still calls him that, so it sticks.

A proud character may try to start their own nickname, such as "Mavra the Ineluctable". Such nicknames will only stick if they keep working at it.

Sometimes someone will just pick up a nickname at the scene and use that for conversation. It's common knowledge that wizardry can be worked against someone, by means of knowing the target's name.

Forms of Address

What do you call someone in formal speech? How do you introduce yourself to strangers? The *forms of address* in Calabria are numerous and strange. Here are some tips.

Only nobles – that is, characters with the Gift of Nobility – may be addressed as "Sir" or "Madam". There are numerous forms of address and how to say them –

characters with the Gift of Etiquette will know how to speak with nobles without embarrassing themselves by using the wrong form of address.

Characters with the Gift of Ordainment are recognized priests and priestesses. The lowest-level ordinaries in the Church of s'Allumer are addressed as "Brother" or "Sister". Common clerics – that is, folks with s'Allumer careers who are not ordained – may be addressed as "Presbyter", such as "Presbyter John". Uneducated lay-folk may slur the words and say "Prester John", instead.

There are no men ordained in the Old Faith of the Doloreaux. Ordained women, known as *Hierarchs*, are addressed as "Blessed".

Commoners are addressed as "Good", such as "Good Hendrick, have you seen my purse?"

Choose a Motto

Your character's *Motto* represents their personal outlook on life. When you're not sure what a character would do, read the motto again, and then act accordingly.

Mottos help you get into the role-playing mood

At the beginning of each play session, you and your fellow players will read your character's Motto out loud. Be enthusiastic! It's time to get into character.

Mottos help you earn Experience Points

At the end of the play session, you and your fellow players will once again read your Mottos, and then it's up to the Game Host to decide if your character lived up to the Motto. If your character kept to the spirit of their Motto, the Game Host will award 1 Experience Point.



Sample Mottos

Choose a motto that not only defines your character's outlook on the world, but also encourages taking some kind of action. Mottos earn points, so you want a motto that's broad enough to cover a variety of heroic acts, but is also one that says when and why your characters does the things that they do. Here are some examples:

- ↔ "All for one and one for all."
- ↔ "Deeds, not words."
- ↔ "Discretion is the better part of valor."
- ↔ "Duty first."
- ↔ "Failure is the mother of success."
- ↔ "First toil, then the grave."
- ↔ "First, do no harm."
- ↔ "Fortune favors the bold."
- ↔ "Get them before they get you."
- ↔ "Honor in all things."
- ↔ "Justice will prevail"
- ↔ "Keep your faith alight, but keep your powder dry."
- ↔ "Know no fear, serve with joy."
- ↔ "Knowledge is belief, belief is power."
- ↔ "Many can hide, but few can stand."
- ↔ "No one is above the law."
- ↔ "No one punishes me with impunity."
- ↔ "Nothing is done in this world until men are ready to die for it."
- ↔ "Peace to all good people."
- ↔ "Success is the nobler brother of revenge."
- ↔ "There's always something new beyond the horizon."
- ↔ "When good folk do nothing, evil prevails."

Choose a Starting Goal

Each character starts with one *Goal* that you get to pick. After character creation, only the Game Host may assign new Goals.

Sample Starting Goals

Your first Goal should be pretty simple. It should be the kind of Goal that starts you on the road to adventure. Here are some sample Goals. Pick one, or make your own:

- ↔ Defeat a foe in combat.
- ↔ Get out of town.
- ↔ Get paid.
- ↔ Go on a real adventure.
- ↔ Help someone out of danger.
- ↔ Meet a real hero.

Choose your Equipment

You begin the game with the Equipment listed in any Trappings Gifts you have taken. You may also start with up to 8 stone (50 kg) of Cheap and Average equipment. You can list your equipment on the back of your character sheet, or on another piece of paper.

You also start with money: *denarii* (₶) equal to the maximum that you could roll on your Career Die. For example, if your Career Die is d8, then you start with 8 coins, called *denarii*. Write that number down on your character sheet, in the "Money" section.

Battle Array

The last step in Character Creation is to fill out the battle array. It's best to take a few minutes to fill this out *before* a fight starts, to avoid delaying the game.

Your **Initiative** is your *Speed & Mind Dice*. You roll these dice at the start of the battle to see how ready you are.

Your **Stride** is usually 1. Gifts can improve this.

Your **Dash** is half of the maximum you could roll on your Speed Dice. (d4=2, d6=3, d8=4, d10=5, d12=6), with a +1 if your Body trait is *greater* than your Speed Trait. If you carry too meach gear and become Burdened, your Dash drops to zero.

Your **Sprint** is your Speed die. Sprint movement is random.

Your **Run** is the *maximum* you could roll on your *Body die*, *plus* the *maximum* you could roll on your *Speed die*, *plus* your *Dash*. For example, if your Body was d8 and your Speed was d4, then your Run would be 8+4+3, or 15.

Your **Attack** dice vary from weapon to weapon. See the Equipment chapter for more details. List each weapon with its attack dice.

Your **Defenses** also vary, but everybody gets at least a **Dodge** defense, which is your *Speed die* and any *Dodge Dice* you have from Skills and the like.

Cover is from shields or cloaks (or magic)

Your **Soak** is your *Body die*. (If you have the Gift of Resolve, you may include your *Will die*, too).

Your **Armor** is from equipment. Most people prefer to list both their dice and their type of armor, such as "Leather d6". Some folks will wear two types of armor, such as "Leather & Cloth d6, d4", at the expense of their Dodge dice and their Dash.

As for **Money**, you start with *denarii* equal to your maximized Career die. So if you have a Career of d6, you start with 6 denarii.

STEP FIVE: Choose your Local Knowledge. Ask your Game Host For suggestions.

STEP SIX: Add thirteen Marks to skills. You may put up to 3 Marks in any one Skill.

STEP SEVEN: Choose Gifts. You get 3 Species Gifts, 3 Career Gifts, and then any 3 Gifts of your choice.

RONCLAW

POPMORPHIC FANTASY ROLE-PLAY

Dice from: _____ Species: _____ Gender: _____

SKILLS		Marks	
Academics	d4	Brawling	
Climbing		Combat	

GIFTS		Page X Refresh?	
Personality: ZEALOUS	(X for bonus d12 on one appropriate roll)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Respite
Language: Calabrese	(Speak the most common language of Calabria)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Respite
Local Knowledge:	(bonus d12 for local knowledge rolls)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Respite
Combat Save	(X to negate Dying or Dead from failed Defense)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Respite
Species: DANGER SENSE	(D12 TO INITIATIVE, OBSERVE DANGER)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SPECIAL
Species: KEEN EARS	(HEAR ULTRASONIC AND QUIET NOISES)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BATTLE
Species: NIGHT VISION	(PARTIAL DARKNESS -> NO DARKNESS)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CHAPTER
Literacy: ELEMENTALIST'S TRAPPINGS: YELLOW	(STUFFED)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Literacy: ELEMENTAL MAGIC (USE ELEMENTAL SPELLS & WEAPONS)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Literacy: LUCK	(X TO RE-ROLL ONE DIE 2 MORE TIMES, TAKE BEST)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
SECRETS OF AIR MAGIC	(EXTRA MAGIC REFRESH)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
LIGHTNING BOLT	(AIM UPGRADES "CREATE AIR")	<input type="checkbox"/>	

MAYRA THE INELUCTABLE

KEY FOR SPECIES d4 d8

Habitat: FOREST Age: 19 Gender: ♀
 Senses: HEAR, SMELL Height: 4' HANDS Weight: 160 lbs
 Diet: OMNIVORE Eyes: AZURE Pelt: BROWN
 Weapons: CLAWS, STYRM Distinguishing Characteristics: NIGHTBLADE OPTIMIZED
 Tails: NIGHT FAVORITE CLOTHES: FURIOUS CLOTHES

PERSONAL MOTTO
JUSTICE WILL PREVAIL

GOALS (up to three)
 1.
 2.
 3.

BATTLE

Initiative: d12, d8, d6 (Speed & Mind Dice)

Movement		Attack		Defense	
Stride: 1	(1)	DASH: zero	(% Max Speed)	ROD @ CLOSE	d8, d6 DAMAGE +2
Sprint: d8	(Speed dice)	Run: 12	(Max speed + Dash)	CREATE AIR @ MEDIUM	d10, d8 DAMAGE +2 CRITICAL
Attack		LIGHTNING BOLT @ MED	d10, d8 DMG +3 CRIT., CONFUSE	Defense dice	d10, 2d8 Dodge
Speed & Dodge Dice		COUNTER w/ROD	d8, d6	PARRY w/ROD	d12, d8, d6 BLOCK MELEE
Soak: d6	(Body dice) Armor: LEATHER & Y. ROBE d6				

Combat Modifiers (Cover Dice, Gifts, etc.)

- X & USE READY ACTION TO CALL FORTH A "CREATE AIR" SPELL
- X & USE AIM ACTION TO BOTH AIM AND UPGRADE "CREATE AIR" TO LIGHTNING BOLT. USE "ATTACK" ACTION TO LAUNCH SPELL.
- SECRETS OF AIR = EXTRA REFRESH TO USE ON ONE AIR MAGIC GIFT.

-Damage & Other Status

any hit = ○ Reeling (punalty d8; no counters) ✕ Burdened (Dash is zero; limit of d8 to Skills)

1 hit = ○ Hurt (+1 damage) ○ Over-Burdened (Burdened, can't run, disarmed)

2 hits = ○ Afraid (cannot attack or rally!)

3 hits = ○ Injured (+1 damage)

Reeling Queue ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○

4 hits = ○ Dying (get first aid!) ○ Knockdown

5 hits = ○ Dead (beyond mortal help) (disadvantage, can't retreat)

6 hits = ○ Overkilled (allies become Afraid) ○ Unconscious (helpless)

○ Sick (Reeling causes Knockdown)

Reeling Queue ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○

Experience ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○

Spent 4 to buy +1 Skill Mark Sound 10 to buy a new Gift

Money: Orichalks Denarii Quincunx Aureals

(1)(1)(1) (1)(1)(1) (1)(1)(1) (1)(1)(1)

HOW TO PLAY HOW TO PLAY

Game Terms	
Bonus	An extra die to roll
Botch	A die roll where all dice come up showing ones
Character	Your representation in the game
Claim	When your character takes advantage of some bonus or ability after-the-fact, not declared beforehand
Contest	When you compare your die roll to someone else's
d4, d6, d8, d10, d12	Four-sided, six-sided, eight-sided, ten-sided, and twelve-sided dice, the kinds used in <i>Ironclaw</i>
Declare	When you say your character is about to do something. Once declared, there's no take-backs
Dice	Funny-shaped things with numbers on them
Difficulty	A number you have to roll higher than, to score a success
Favor	After rolling the dice, re-roll one 1
Host	The Game Host, the player in charge of the whole game, who says what goes and what doesn't
Limit	A cap on your die size
Penalty	A bonus die for the other side
Player	You – someone who plays the <i>Ironclaw</i> game
Quota	A running tally of successes
Roll	A throw of the dice
Rote	Don't roll – assume dice came up max, but ½ successes
Rule of Four	Many rolls are vs. 3 – count your dice that come up 4 or better
Success	A die that rolls over your difficulty target
Tie	A die that rolls the same as your difficulty target

One Participant is the Game Host

The *Game Host* is a lot like the director in a play or a movie. The Game Host's job is to moderate the action. The Host describes a scene to the players, such as, "You all meet in a dimly-lit tavern. Suddenly, a man stumbles over to your table, clutching a scroll in one hand, his fatal wound in the other. He falls upon your table, the death rattle sounding from his lips, and the scroll falls from his lifeless fingers, unrolling to reveal a map. *What do you do?*"

The other *Players* are now free to tell the Game Host what their characters would do. One Player might say, "I grab for the map!" Another might say, "I get up and run for the tavern entrance, to see if this man's killer is still around!" A third might say, "I go through the dead man's pockets for loose change." The only limits are the Player's imaginations.

After polling the Players, the Game Host must then decide the results of their actions. "The map is written on some ancient paper and has markings in a language that your character doesn't recognize." ... "You run outside, but all you see is the darkness of a torrential rainstorm, and a quick flash of lightning that illuminates an empty

courtyard." ... "You find four copper coins, an old rusty knife, and a small rock on a string." Then the Players may react, and thus the game goes back and forth.

The Game Host Is In Charge Of The Fun, Not Some Silly Book

Just like a director, the Game Host has the final say over what goes on and what doesn't. This book may be full of rules, but no rulebook can cover every single thing the Players may want their characters to do. A good Host will have to make a lot of judgments on the spot on how something works. (We've included a lot of things we think will come up in our Spot Rules chapter, but in a game that's only limited by imagination, there's a lot more things we *didn't* think of!)

Sometimes the Game Host will think that something should work one way, when the rule-book describes something different. Game Hosts should use their own discretion to decide what goes on and what doesn't. A good Host is fair, a good Host is consistent, and a good Host listens to their players ... but above all, a good Host makes sure the game is fun for everyone involved!

Declare First; Claim Later

The rules make a distinction between when you have to say you're going to do something ... and when you can take a benefit after something happens.

When the rules say you must **declare** something, that means you have to say your character is going to do it, so that the Game Host hears you. For example, "I declare that my character will climb the maple tree," or "I declare that my character will shoot the guard with my crossbow." After you're familiar with the game, you might shorten these phrases to things like, "I climb the tree," with the assumption that it's your character, not you personally, doing this thing.

The Game Host will either tell you the action succeeds, or if you have to roll some dice or something first. For example, they might say, "Roll your Body & Climbing dice versus 4" or "Roll your Speed & Ranged Combat dice, the guard will attempt to dodge."

After rolling dice, something good or bad might happen. For example, a good roll means your character climbs the tree ... but a really bad roll might mean a nasty fall. Other characters will certainly react to what you do – for example, whether you hit the guard or not, anyone seeing you shoot at the guard might raise an alarm, or they might come to aid the guard's defense.

HOW TO PLAY

If the rules tell you that you have to declare something, you have to do it before rolling any dice. For example, if you want to use a Mighty Attack ability, you must declare you will use that ability *before* rolling any attack dice. Once those dice hit the table, it's too late.

When the rules say you can **claim** something, it's usually a reaction to something else. For example, "I claim cover from that tree." Unlike declaring, you can claim something after the fact, even after rolling dice. For example, you can roll your defense dice first, *then* decide if you want to claim a bonus for cover.

Your character will have lots of special abilities. Some abilities will require you to declare that you use them. Other abilities can be claimed to get yourself out of situations or to give you a surprise edge.

The Funny-Shaped Things With the Numbers On Them: Dice

Dice have four, six, eight, ten, or twelve sides. Dice are abbreviated "d" followed by a number. For example, if the text says "d10", then you need to roll a ten-sided die.

Sometimes, you will have to roll multiple dice. For example, if the text says "2d6", then you will roll two six-sided dice.

Dice with more sides are sometimes called "bigger" or

"larger", and dice with fewer sides are "smaller". For example, a d12 is larger than a d4, because it has more sides and it can score bigger numbers.

Other times, you may have to roll multiple dice of all kinds of sizes. For example, if the text says "d10, 2d8, 3d6", then you will roll one ten-sided die, two eight-sided dice, and three six-sided dice.

After rolling dice, the number that's rolled is called the *number showing*. In most cases, your single *highest-showing number* is the important one. Following the previous example, if you rolled d10, 2d8, and 3d6, and those dice came up showing 4, 3, 1, 5, 2, and 6 ... then your highest-showing die is the one that came up "6".

Don't Add Your Dice Together!

In *Ironclaw*, dice are not added together. Each die is compared separately against another die.

Your Highest Showing Die: The Score

Roll your dice. The highest-showing die is the score. (Don't add any numbers together, we just care about the highest-showing number.)



Beating the odds: Successes

Many of your rolls will be against a flat *difficulty* number.. For example, if you need to climb a tree, the Game Host may ask you to roll your character's Body & Climbing Dice vs. 3. Every die that rolls 4 or better – that is, higher than 3 – is a *success*. After you roll your dice, if at least one of them comes up showing 4 or better, you've climbed that tree.

The Rule of Four

The standard difficulty is 3. For example, if the text says "Mind & Supernatural vs. 3", that means you roll your Mind die and any Supernatural dice you might have. Only dice that beat a 3 will be successes, so count each die that comes up 4 or better as a success. Since most tasks in the game will be against a 3, we call this *the Rule of 4*.

In some rare cases, you might have to roll higher. For example, a particularly sheer wall might require Body & Climbing vs. 8. In this case, only dice that roll 9 or better will score a success. If your dice can't roll that high – say, they only have eight, six, or four sides – then you won't be able to succeed on the task at all!

Overwhelming Victory: Multiple Successes

Sometimes, it's not just important enough to know that you won ... you have to know how well you've won. The better you roll, the more *successes* you score.

When you roll two or more dice, you can score two or more successes. Each die that you roll that comes up showing more than your target is a success.

For example, let's say that you rolled 7, 5, and 2, and your difficulty was 3. Your 7 and your 5 are both greater than 4, so you have two successes.

Since multiple successes are only possible when you roll more dice. For example, to build something requires rolls of Mind & Craft dice. Since everyone has at least a Mind die, then anyone can roll one success. Something that only a trained crafter could make, such as a fine cabinet or a sharp sword, would require two successes or more.

Facing off against someone: Dice-Rolling Contest

Many times, your character will have a conflict with another character. For example, you might want to interrogate another character who doesn't want to tell you anything. Or perhaps you want to convince a guard to let you pass through the gate, when they're worried you might be up to no good. Or sometimes you're searching for a item that was hidden from you.

A *contest* is when you and another character roll dice. Compare your highest-showing die to the other character's highest-showing die. Whoever rolls the highest is the winner.

Note that you only compare your single highest-rolling die. Don't add the dice together.

If two or more of your dice beat their single best, then you have multiple successes

For example, if you rolled 7, 5, and 2, and your opponent rolled 4, 3, and 1 ... then you won, because your 7 is higher than their 4. In fact, your 7 and your 5 are higher than their best (the 4), so you have *two successes*.

When scoring multiple successes, ties can become successes in your favor if you can somehow tip the roll in your favor. If your roll was 5,4,4,4, and your opponent rolled 4 ... then you only have one success – your 5 is better than 4. If you want to make those 4s count, then you have to somehow tip the roll so your ties become successes.

Rolling all ones: Botches

If your highest die is a 1 ... well, that means you rolled *all ones*. A roll of all 1s is the worst anyone can roll – it's called a Botch. A Botch isn't just a failure; it's a spectacular mess of bad luck and incompetence.

When two characters face off in a contest, and they *both* Botch, the result should be a group failure so spectacular as to be the talk of jokes for months to come.

Making Ties into Successes: Breaking a Tie

Sometimes, something will happen to tip a roll in your favor. For example, you might have better training, or you might be able to take advantage of the circumstances.

When you *break* a tie, you have a success. For example, if your highest-showing die is a 4, and their highest-showing die is a 4, then you've tied. If you claim some advantage that lets you break the tie, then you have a success and they just lost.

Sometimes, the rules will make it clear when you can break a tie to your advantage. For example, if you're using Dodge skill to avoid an attack, and your dice are tied with your attacker, you can break a tie by retreating behind some cover.

Other times, the Game Host will have to make a judgment call. The Host should ask the players if they have any suggestions what might break the tie. If no one can come up with anything, then both rollers should get at least part of what they wanted.

HOW TO PLAY

Quotas

Long-term tasks may require many die rolls with many successes. For example, to build a bridge may require 100 successes of Craft skill, or to recover from sickness might require 24 successes with Body rolls.

A *quota* is a long-term tally of successes. Once all the successes are made, the quota is filled and the task is over.

Some quotas have many multiple skills or abilities that apply to meeting the quota. Any success adds to the tally!

Many quotas only allow one try per hour, or one try per day, or one roll only during some other time interval.

At the discretion of the Game Host, when rolling to fulfill a quota, a Botch may remove one or more successes from the tally ... or it may even reduce the tally to zero!

Extra Dice for you: Bonus

Sometimes you'll be able to claim some advantage. For example, maybe you have a Gift that lets you claim a bonus d12 among other nobles or among criminals. A **bonus** is when you have an extra die to roll.

When you have bonus die, just include it with the rest of your dice. Any benefits that you may claim, such as Favor, also apply to your bonus dice.

Extra dice for them: Penalty

Other times, you'll be at some disadvantage. For example, maybe you can't see very well, and there's a penalty d8 for you to spot your targets. A **penalty** is another die that's rolled against you.

When you're rolling against someone else in a contest, a penalty die is a bonus die for the other side. The game effect is if your opponent got a bonus die.

When you're rolling against a fixed difficulty, the Game Host rolls the penalty die. If that die rolls higher than the difficulty, then you have a higher number to beat. For example, if the difficulty is 3, but the penalty die comes up 7, then you have to beat a 7. If the penalty die came up 2 ... then you still have to beat a 3.

Getting Some Help: Assists

Many tasks, such as climbing over a wall, building a bridge, or researching topic in a library, are easier if you have some help. In game terms, many rolls can benefit from an assist.

The Game Host decides how many assistants a task can have. As a general rule, a job rarely benefits from having more than two assistants.

Designate one character to be the *task master*, and all others to be the *assistants*. The Game Host should decide how many assistants are appropriate for a given task – more than three assistants, and you might have too many cooks in your kitchen.

First, determine the difficulty of the task. If the difficulty is random, roll that number now. (The Game Host may choose to keep that number a secret.)

Second, each assistant rolls to beat a 3. If they can roll a 4 or better, they grant the task master a d8 assist bonus. If an assistant *botches* (that is, they roll all 1s), the task is ruined — the Players and the Game Host should come up with some suitably horrible and embarrassing screw-up that ruins everything.

Finally, the task master rolls their dice, with any and all bonus d8s from the assistants (if applicable). The score and the successes that the task master gets are the final results of the roll.

Do not use assists for combat rolls. Use the rules for Tactics, instead.

Same Old, Same Old: Rotes

It might not always be necessary to roll, to perform a task. Doing the same thing over and over again really doesn't have a lot of unfamiliarity or risk to it. Sometimes, you may be able to do a task *by rote*.

When a task isn't dire or contested, you can use your *rote*, instead.

When going by rote, maximize all your dice. For example, if you normally roll d10, 2d8, and 3d6 ... don't roll. Instead, play as if you rolled 10, 8, 8, 6, 6, and 6.

Then, compare your numbers to the target. In our example, the target was 7, so we scored 3 successes.

Finally, *halve your successes*, rounding down. Following the above example, 3 halved is 1 ½, which rounds down to 1. Hey, we got 1 success, that's enough to pull off an average performance, and we didn't even have to roll!

Rotes are excellent when you're easily qualified to do the job – that is, when you have two dice – and you only need one success. Rotes can make the game go much faster, especially for repeated tasks. For example, if you have to drive a cart using Mind & Vehicles vs. 3, and you have 2d6, then your rote would give you 1 success, so as long as there's no hang-ups, the Game Host could rule that you just use your rote. You could drive the cart for days without risking failure. Another character who only had a single d6 would have to roll, since their rote is only good for ½ success, which rounds down to none.

When can I use a rote?

Ask your Game Host if you can perform a task by rote or not. There are three general questions to ask, to see if a task can be done by rote:

- ↔ *Are you rolling against a fixed difficulty?* Some rolls are simply vs. 3. Those tasks are suitable for beating by rote. If you have to roll against someone else's skill, or against some variable dice, then it's not really a task to do by rote.
- ↔ *Is the task familiar to you?* If you've climbed that same tree twice before, then you can probably do it by rote on the third try. If it's something strange, then maybe it should be resolved randomly — and without a rote. If your roll has favor — say, because it's your favored use of your skill — then this task is definitely familiar to you.
- ↔ *Is the task without any risk for failure?* If you have all day to pick a lock, and there's no one watching over your shoulder threatening you as you do it, then you could do this one by rote. If you're breaking and entering, and guards could show up at any moment and interrupt you, then the task is far more dire, and you should probably roll.

Rotes work great for familiar, reliable tasks. Rotes can speed game-play by avoiding tedious die-rolling for tasks that are a sure thing.

Many Hands Make Light Work: Combining Rotes and Assists

Many people might assist one task-master. All that die rolling can get pretty tedious. It may be easier to let folks use their rotes when assisting.

Since all successes are halved when working by rote, only assistants with two or more dice will be able to get 1 success or more, to grant the main roller any extra dice.

To move things along even faster, the task master may also use a rote. Multiple workers like this might be necessary for tasks that require two, three, or more successes in one roll.

Less-Than-Ideal Circumstances: Limits

Sometimes, you're not at your best. When your dice have a *limit*, they can't be any bigger than the limit size. Reduce all your dice to the limit size.

For example, let's say you usually roll d12, 2d10, and d6. If you have a limit of d8, then none of your dice can be bigger than d8. Your dice drop to 3d8 and d6.

Examples of Limits

- ↔ **Burden Limit:** If you carry too much weight, you can't move very fast. Your Speed & Dodge dice are limited to d8 or less.
- ↔ **Riding Limit:** If you are riding a mount, and you're not very good, your other skills will suffer. Any skills you use while riding are limited to your largest Riding die (or d4, whichever is better).
- ↔ **Swimming Limit:** If you're in waist-deep water or deeper, and you're not an accomplished swimmer, your other skills will suffer. Any skills you use while swimming are limited to your largest Swimming die (or d4, whichever is better).
- ↔ **Vehicles Limit:** If you're on a moving vehicle and you're asked to do something complex, your other skills will suffer if you lack experience. Any skills you use while in an unstable vehicle are limited to your largest Vehicles die (or d4, whichever is better).

Something for Nothing: Favor

In some rare circumstances, you may have a minor advantage.

If your roll is favored, check your dice to see if any of them came up showing "1". If one did, you may re-roll it. The second result stands.

If two or more dice come up 1, re-roll the larger one. You only get to re-roll one die, so make it a good one.

A roll of all 1s is a Botch — the worst possible result. Since a favored roll re-rolls one 1, it's much less likely to Botch.

If you have even a single Mark in a skill, you may have a favorite use — it could be when you use a specific tool or weapon, or when you use the skill in a specific situation or circumstance. Declaring your favorite use is free, and it gives you the benefit of favor.

CALABRIA

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IN THE YEAR OF THE MIRACLE
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- Demesne**
- FAVOIRDUPUIS
 - BISCLAVRET
 - DOLOREAUX
 - PHELAN
 - TRISKELLIAN

MERIDIONAL OCEAN



APPENDIX: TIME

Times of Day

Most people work a set schedule, usually from the beginning of their cycle to the end. However, church-going folk have a rigid time-table for certain prayers.

As laid out in the *Testaments of Helloise*, each day is divided into eight parts, known as *offices*. Each office is 1/8 of a day, or 3 hours. The church bell is rung to mark the changing of the offices.

Matins

(midnight – 3 am)

The Office of Matins is also known as the “night vigil,” because it takes place at the dead of night (midnight to 3 a. m.) Most churches do not have full services during this time unless there is some great need, such as prayers for those dying of plague or protection from an ominous comet seen in the sky. If a city has a large population with the night-cycle, the “matins men and women” will be happy to provide absolution for their souls.

Lauds

(3 am - 6 am)

The Office of Lauds begins shortly before sunrise (or for those with clocks, 3 a. m. and lasts until 6 a. m.) At this time, devotionals to the glories of those who have Ascended are offered in song and in prayer.

Prime

(6 am - 9 am)

Many churches are not yet open to the laity until the Office of Prime, sometimes called the “morning hours” because of the time (6 a. m. to 9 a. m.), also known as the “short office” because the prayers offered during this time are usually the shortest in the day’s program.

Tierce

(9 am - noon)

Sometimes called the “third office,” because of the time of day (9 a. m. to noon), the Office of Tierce is customarily for private prayer. Clergy and Priests retreat to their cells for private meditation and personal devotions, except on holy days.

Sext

(noon - 3 pm)

Since the Office of Sext happens at noon, many workers use their break for lunch to offer a brief prayer. Only the most obsessive churches hold prayers during this office

Nones

(3 pm - 6 pm)

All churches perform the devotions to see the day out, during the Office of Nones.

Lucernarim

(6 pm - 9 pm)

Many theologians believe that it was within the hours of 6 p. m. and 9 p. m. when the Miracle of Helloise took place, during the Office of Lucernarim — hence it is during this office that many congregations sing the praises of the Most Beatific, in a series of prayers called the “Lucernales.”

Compline

(9 pm - midnight)

It is then followed by the final office of the day — Compline — which is often reserved by Clerics for their meditations after a day of good works.

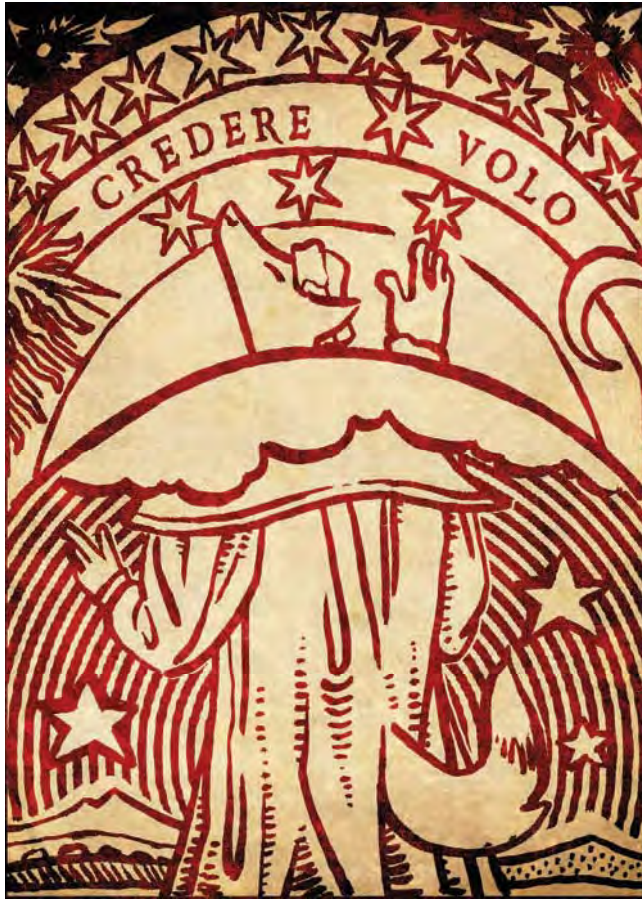
Days, Months, and Years

Most dating systems simply list the name of the king or queen, and the year of the reign, such as “in the fourth year of King Vandringar, a great plague struck the land.” Dating historical documents requires extensive knowledge of who ruled and when.

The s’Allumer Calendar

A key exception to the usual dating scheme is the Calendar of the Church of s’Allumer, which is used throughout Triskellian, Avoirdupois, and Bisclavret domains. The Church of s’Allumer begins the numbering of their years “after the Miracle of Helloise,” starting at the year 1. Prior to that event, all dates were recorded as the year and the day of the current Don Rinaldi’s reign. The current year is 882 *Après le Miracle*.

The s’Allumer calendar divides the year up into 12 months, each one of varying days; the average year is 365 days. The first day of every month, known as the kalens, is the standard marker for the period of interest on a loan or lease. The s’Allumer week is divided into seven days, named *Lundi*, *Mardi*, *Mercredi*, *Jeudi*, *Vendredi*, *Samedi*, and *Dimache*. The last day, *Dimache*, is a day of rest and worship; shops are closed



and it is forbidden by Triskellian law to exchange money within the city limits.

It has come to the attention of navigators and astronomers that the 365-day calendar is not perfect; the true year is closer to 365 218/900 days. To fix this, the s'Allumer calendar has a leap year, a 366 day year, where the month of Snow is 29 days instead of 28. The rules for a leap year are:

- ↔ Every year divisible by 4 is usually a leap year, except ...
- ↔ If the year is divisible by 100, then it is not a leap year, except ...
- ↔ If, when the year is divided by 900, it leaves a remainder of 200 or 600, then the year is a leap year.

The Eight Liturgical Holy Days of s'Allumer

Although the orthodoxy of the Penitents insists that the object of proper devotion is not Helloise, but s'Allumer, the Light of All Life, the clerical calendar is in fact a year-long pageant that begins and ends with her birth and martyrdom. There are eight major holy days in the calendar of the Penitents, each with their own appropriate customs.

Praelúcidia
(First Full Moon after 1st Day of Yule)

The "Promise of Light" falls in mid to late Yule, on the first Full Moon of the New Year, and heralds the anticipation of the coming of Most Venerated Helloise. Honoring the Virtue of Generosity, this festival is marked by the exchange of gifts, and is often treated as a continuation of the great celebrations of Solacia that end the year.

Muliebrea
(21st Day of Sap)

The birth of Helloise is celebrated on the 21st of Sap, the Spring Equinox, when there will be more daylight hours than night, and Light begins to dominate Darkness. A tradition started in some of the smaller villages: the names of all the young girls are gathered into an urn, and then each boy draws out a name, so that they may be paired up for the rest of the month. In larger cities, Muliebrea is a popular time for romance, a time to shower gifts upon the recipients of one's affection.

Frûgâlitia
(21st Day of Flower to 21st Day of Strawberry)

Beginning on the 21st of Flower is the 32-day festival of the Frûgâlitia. During this time, one is expected to abstain from eating from sunrise to sunset of each day. While most Penitents then dine sparingly in the evening, some of the more extreme Orchomenes will indulge in great feasts that last well into each night. In contrast, the Haimorrs will often subject themselves to even greater deprivations, subsisting for the whole of the month on a few crusts of stale bread.

The day before Frûgâlitia is a great carnival day in many regions. Even normally-temperate individuals will often indulge shamelessly on this occasion—and spend the next month in penance. The Holy See of s'Allumer has considered proscribing such "Antefrûgâlita" festivals, but no formal decision has yet been made. The Hyperduliants associate this day with Saint Cleofrid d'Honnête.

Vadimônia (21st Day of Strawberry)

This Holy Day falls on Midsummer's Day, the 21st of Strawberry. This is the day of Promises Kept and Commitments Honored, commending the virtue of self-control. Many legal contracts and obligations begin or expire on this date. Vadimônia is traditionally the day when sentences of slavery expire, and when oaths of fealty are sworn or renewed. It is not uncommon for an aspirant to a Capitular Order to spend this holiday in a vigil of purification, preparing to swear the vows of the Order on this day.

Harmon Brock began his life-long journey on Vadimônia; hence, this day also marks the beginning of the annual "Walk of Eight Hundred Lights" in Triskellian.

Demetendia (1st Day of Green)

A curious custom of unknown origins is celebrated on this day: the *Feast of Misrule*. During Misrule, the noble bows to the commoner and the commoner presides over the noble. Two commoners are chosen to be the "King and Queen of Misrule," and they are dressed in garish finery and paraded through the village, where they issue mock proclamations and generally pretend to be arrogant monarchs. In some villages, the roles of King and Queen are ritually assigned to the village idiots. In other places, such as the great city of Triskellian, it is customary to bake two honey cakes, each with a bean inside, and when the slices are passed out, whoever finds the bean inside their cake will be King or Queen for a day.

Demetendia is also a day for pranksters. Many cities, such as Triskellian, have strict laws governing interpersonal relations — known as "blue laws" ... but a fine reading of the letter of the law will find that many of them are not enforceable on Demetendia!

Auctumnitia (21st Day of Harvest)

Also called "The Festival of Zeal," this holiday marks the Autumnal Equinox and the peak of the harvest season. On this day, the faithful strive to out-do each other in all areas of endeavor. Great fairs and tournaments are held, with competitions of all kinds: the nobility compete in mounted and hand-to-hand combat, while the commoners vie to display the largest crops and the healthiest livestock or compete in wrestling matches and feats of Strength and endurance (including the ever-popular eating and drinking contests). In Sauldre, the day of the Grand Course is on the first Samedi after Auctumnitia.

Lachrymosia (1st New Moon after Hunter 21st)

This somber festival falls on the New Moon closest to the end of Hunter's and the beginning of Frost. Coincidentally, this corresponds almost exactly with Samhain, the Phelan's New Year. It is the Night of Humility, commemorating the Great Plague that befell Calabria centuries ago. It is the time of year when all are reminded of their mortality and remember those who have passed on. Mourning clothes are traditional. In most towns and villages, a solemn, candlelit procession begins at sundown, and continues until the dawn, ending at the church or cathedral, where the clergy preside over a funerary ritual for all who have died during the preceding year. This is intended to be an impersonal and abstract mourning: deaths that occur in the week immediately preceding and following this night are considered bad omens in the folk tradition, boding ill for the year to come. Haimorrs and others of a gloomy bent will retain their mourning garb until the beginning of Solacia.

Solacia

(21st to 26th Days of Night)

This is the Great Holy Season of the Penitents of s'Allumer, the Days of Penance, honoring the Martyrdom of Helloise. It begins on the longest night of the year: Night 21st, the Winter Solstice, when Darkness seems to have triumphed at last over the Light. On this night, in plague-wracked Triskellian, the nurse Helloise experienced her Revelation of Light. Over the next four days, Helloise walked through the city, healing the sick; today, it is traditional for the wealthy to bring gifts of food and clothing to the needy. The 26th is the day of the Miracle, in which Helloise gave herself as a Vessel of the Light, and purged the city of the plague: this is the great day of celebration, the Triumph of Light.



<i>s'Allumer Month</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Holiday</i>	<i>Doloreaux Lunation</i>
Yule 1-31	31 days	Praelúcidia (first full moon after Yule 1)	Birch 6 – Rowan 8
Snow 1-28	28 days		Rowan 9 – Ash 8
Sap 1-31	31 days	Muliebrea (Sap 21)	Ash 9 – Alder 11
Grass 1-30	30 days		Alder 12 – Willow 13
Flower 1-31	31 days	Frûgâlítia Begins (Flower 21)	Willow 14 – Hawthorn 16
Strawberry 1-30	30 days	Frûgâlítia Ends; Vadimônia (Strawberry 21)	Hawthorn 17 – Oak 18
Thunder 1-31	31 days		Oak 19 – Holly 21
Green 1-31	31 days	Demetendia (Green 1)	Holly 22 – Hazel 24
Harvest 1-30	30 days	Auctumnititia (Harvest 21)	Hazel 25 – Vine 26
Hunter's 1-31	31 days	Lachrymosia (first New Moon after Hunter 21)	Vine 27 – Reed 1
Frost 1-30	30 days		Reed 2 – Elder 3
Night 1-31	31 days	Solacia (Night 21-26)	Elder 4 – Birch 5

The Doloreaux Calendar

The Doloreaux continue to use that their own calendar system, much to the consternation of scholars and historians. Their records will list events starting from the year of the current ruler, such as “In the fourth year of the rule of Queen Impérieuse.”

The Doloreaux Calendar divides the year into 13 lunations, plus one extra day known as the “Secret of the Unhewn Stone”—also known as “a year and a day”.

Each lunation is precisely 28 days. Whether and when a “leap day” is added varies from place to place, which creates another source of confusion.

The Doloreaux calendar has seven days, named *Dé Domhnaigh*, *Dé Luan*, *Dé Mairt*, *Dé Céadaoin*, *Déardaoin*, *Dé Haoine*, and *Dé Sathairn*.

<i>Doloreaux Lunation</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>s'Allumer Month</i>
Birch 1-28	28 days	Night 24 – Yule 20
Rowan 1-28	28 days	Yule 21 – Snow 17
Ash 1-28	28 days	Snow 18 – Sap 17
Alder 1-28	28 days	Sap 18 – Grass 14
Willow 1-28	28 days	Grass 15 – Flower 12
Hawthorn 1-28	28 days	Flower 13 – Strawberry 9
Oak 1-28	28 days	Strawberry 10 – Thunder 7
Holly 1-28	28 days	Thunder 8 – Green 4
Hazel 1-28	28 days	Green 5 – Harvest 1
Vine 1-28	28 days	Harvest 2-29
Ivy 1-28	28 days	Harvest 30 – Hunter's 27
Reed 1-28	28 days	Hunter's 28 – Frost 24
Elder 1-28	28 days	Frost 25 – Night 22
Secret of the Unhewn Stone	1 day	Night 23

The Phelan Calendar

The Druids of the Phelan study the heavens and the keeping of time for both worldly and spiritual purposes. The practical matters of horticulture and husbandry depend on a keen understanding of the seasons and their changes — and for the Phelan, it is also vital to be aware of the ebb and flow of the sacred. The expression of the divine is everywhere in these harsh lands, and their influences wax and wane with both the seasons of the sun and the phases of the moon. They must be appeased with rituals and festivals at the appropriate times.

The Phelan are children of the night and the moon, and they count her changing faces to order the year. So the Phelan will measure time in nights, rather than days — something that happened last week happened “seven nights ago.”

Each month begins with the new moon. The year begins with winter, the darkest season. However, the faces of the moon turn in their own time, and do not closely follow the course of the sun. Hence, every two and a half years, an extra intercalate month is added to the regular course of twelve, and the calendar repeats itself every five years.

The months are categorized as either *Mat* (good) or *An Mat* (bad), and this expression of fortune or misfortune will influence the auguries and general tone of that month’s spiritual aspects. *Mat* months are thirty days long, while *An Mat* months are only 29 days; since the intercalate months are each considered *Mat*, good fortune has a slight edge over bad. The months are divided into fortnights, the first from new moon to full moon, and the second from full moon back to new. *Mat* months have two fifteen-day fortnights; in *An Mat* months, a fifteen-day fortnight is followed by one of only fourteen days.

Phelan Holy Days and Festivals

The Phelan divide their year as they do the rest of time, into a dark time and a bright time. They recognize and celebrate the transitions from dark to light and back to dark again with holy days and festivals. The *Albans* mark the Solstices and Equinoxes, but are of concern to few other than the Druids. They are considered times of mystic import, when light and darkness stand in balance, or dominate one over the other. At these times, certain esoteric magical workings become easier or necessary.

Every class and profession across the Phelan realms, however, celebrates the great Fire Festivals. They mark the beginnings of the seasons in Phelan reckoning, and fall roughly midway between the *Albans*. Foremost among these are Samhain, the beginning of Winter and indeed of the Phelan year, and Beltane, the beginning of Summer.

The Phelan year begins with the month of Samonios, and Samonios begins with the Festival of **Samhain**, midway between the Autumn Equinox and the Winter Solstice. Traditionally, the festival lasts three days before the beginning of the year, on the first day of the year itself, and for three day thereafter, for a total of seven days. Only the most prosperous regions celebrate the full seven days, however; more commonly, only three days are celebrated.

The last of the harvest has been gathered, and agriculture winds to a halt for the winter. Fairs, markets, races, religious assemblies, and gatherings of all sorts occur at this time. The great chieftains meet to debate the weighty issues of the day. Rituals of mourning are held for the passing of summer. Across the land, the lights in each household are extinguished, to be rekindled from the great ceremonial bonfires in each community. At the end of the festival, select *cumalaí* are sacrificed, their blood returning to fertilize the sleeping earth.

Samhain is a time between times, not entirely of one year or another—and hence, not entirely of one world



or another. The veil between this world and the others are at their weakest, and spirits are thought to be abroad. In many communities, the young men will light blazing torches, often from the ceremonial bonfires, and run with them around the borders of their farms to ward off spirits, goblins, and ill-fortune. This time of paradox and transition extends to social roles, as well. Many celebrations involve role-switching — in Cathair Finias, for example, there is a growing tradition to declare a “King or Queen of Misrule” — a Fool who wears a crown of rags and wanders around the countryside pretending to be chieftain.

Imbolc falls at the beginning of Anagantios, between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox. It marks the Coming of Spring — not the *beginning* of Spring, but the first signs that spring is returning. The cumalaí and other livestock grow restless, and often begin to lay their eggs, though the first fertile eggs are still weeks away. Many herdsmen have the custom of breaking the first-lain egg onto the soil as a sacrifice, giving thanks to the earth and preparing it for the returning fertility of Spring. The fires of household and forge are blessed, and farming implements are consecrated for the coming season.

Giamonios begins with the festival of **Beltane**, the second-most important holiday after Samhain. Falling between the Spring Equinox and the Summer Solstice, Beltane marks the beginning of Summer’s half of the year. The name means “brilliant fire,” and, once again bright bonfires are lit, to celebrate the return of warmth and light to the earth, or (by some tales) to coax the returning Sun to give its warmth again. The bonfires are built in pairs, and the cumal herds are driven between them, purifying them for the coming year in hopes of keeping them free from disease.

It is said that the goblin-folk are particularly active at this time of year, and it is dangerous to sleep out of doors. Small children and the heedless have been known to vanish, never to be seen again.

Lughnasadh falls at the beginning of Elemban, between the Summer Solstice and the Autumn Equinox. Like Samhain and Beltane, it is a harvest festival — it marks the beginning of the harvest season. To dig roots or cut grain before this day is considered to be at best the sign of a poor farmer or householder, and at worst one with a callous disregard for the spirits of earth and green. Races, contests and fairs mark this holiday, along with pageants intended to persuade the greedy earth-spirits to relinquish the fruits of the soil so that the harvest might begin. The figure of the “Corn King” often plays a major role in these: an effigy that is burned, tossed into a lake, or otherwise sacrificed to ensure the prosperity of the clan through the harsh winter months, to later be reborn. It is believed the

“Corn King” tradition started with the Keylljeyder, and to them this King is a deity of major importance.

	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five
Summertime	Quimon (30 days)				
	Samonois (30 days)	Samonois (30 days)	Samonois (30 days)	Samonois (30 days)	Samonois (30 days)
	Duman (29 days)	Duman (29 days)	Duman (29 days)	Duman (29 days)	Duman (29 days)
	Riuros (30 days)	Riuros (30 days)	Riuros (30 days)	Riuros (30 days)	Riuros (30 days)
	Anagantios (29 days)	Anagantios (29 days)	Anagantios (29 days)	Anagantios (29 days)	Anagantios (29 days)
	Orgonios (30 days)	Orgonios (30 days)	Orgonios (30 days)	Orgonios (30 days)	Orgonios (30 days)
	Cutios (30 days)	Cutios (30 days)	Cutios (30 days)	Cutios (30 days)	Cutios (30 days)
			Giallos (30 days)		
Wintertime	Giamonios (29 days)	Giamonios (29 days)	Giamonios (29 days)	Giamonios (29 days)	Giamonios (29 days)
	Simiuisonnos (30 days)	Simiuisonnos (30 days)	Simiuisonnos (30 days)	Simiuisonnos (30 days)	Simiuisonnos (30 days)
	Equos (29 days)	Equos (29 days)	Equos (29 days)	Equos (29 days)	Equos (29 days)
	Elemban (29 days)	Elemban (29 days)	Elemban (29 days)	Elemban (29 days)	Elemban (29 days)
	Edrinios (30 days)	Edrinios (30 days)	Edrinios (30 days)	Edrinios (30 days)	Edrinios (30 days)
	Cantlos (29 days)	Cantlos (29 days)	Cantlos (29 days)	Cantlos (29 days)	Cantlos (29 days)





Money: Orichalks _____ Denarii: _____ Quincunx: _____ Aureals: _____
(=1/12 ₾) (=1 ₾) (=3 ₾) (=24 ₾)

(Marks: One=d4, Two=d6, Three=d8, Four=d10, Five=d12, Six=d12,d4, etc.)

*BOTH SPECIES AND CAREER INCLUDE "STRENGTH", SO ANONYMOUS HAS SUBSTITUTED "INCREASED TRAIT: BODY".

X

○○○ ○○○ ○○○ ○○○ ○○○ ○○○ Spend 4 to buy +1 Skill Mark.
○○○ ○○○ ○○○ ○○○ ○○○ ○○○ Spend 10 to buy a new Gift.





NAME: PRESBYTER VESPER

SPECIES

d 8

CAREER

